

This Week in Washington

Pombo Supports Education Measures

Measures Improve Teacher Training Programs, More than Triple Loan Forgiveness for In-Demand Teachers

Congressman Richard Pombo voted to approve two major pieces of legislation to help states and schools ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn from highly qualified teachers. The bills, the Ready to Teach Act, H.R. 2211 and the Teacher Recruitment & Retention Act, H.R. 438, were both approved by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in the House.

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act more than triples the maximum amount of loan forgiveness - from \$5,000 in current law to \$17,500 - available to highly qualified teachers in math, science, and special education who commit to teaching in needy schools for five years. This bill provides a dramatic increase in the financial incentive to help teachers in subject areas facing the greatest shortages to teach in schools serving disadvantaged students which often face the greatest difficulty in recruiting and retaining high quality teachers.

In addition to the dramatic new loan forgiveness available for teachers, the House also approved legislation to strengthen teacher training programs to ensure that teachers are able to meet the highly qualified standard in No Child Left Behind. The Ready to Teach Act makes improvements to the teacher training programs funded under Title II of the Higher Education Act to provide the teachers of tomorrow with the skills they will need to be ready to teach when they enter the classroom. The legislation also recognizes that flexibility should exist in methods used for training highly qualified teachers, and, for that reason, would allow funds to be used for innovative methods in teacher preparation programs, such as charter colleges of education, which can provide an alternative gateway for teachers to become highly qualified.

"We need to ensure that we have the best teachers possible in every school," Pombo stated. "By increasing loan forgiveness to teachers in schools that need the most help and strengthening teacher training, we have worked to make good on our promise to leave no child behind. As a parent, I am proud of the bipartisan action Congress has taken this week for education."

Speaker Hastert Names Pombo and Tauzin Co-Chairs of Task Force for Affordable Natural Gas

Urges Panel Findings by September 30th to Help Consumers Avoid Energy Crisis

(WASHINGTON, DC) With a potential natural gas crisis looming this fall and winter because of historically high prices and low inventories, U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) took action today to help ward off its devastating impact on American families, farms and businesses.

With 60-million homes, businesses and industries dependent upon natural gas, Speaker Hastert announced a Republican Task Force for Affordable Natural Gas. The Speaker charged the 18-Member panel to report back within 80 days, by September 30th, on three main areas of inquiry:

1. The causes of today's natural gas shortage;
2. The impact of natural gas prices on the American economy; and,
3. Short and long-term ideas to encourage a stable supply of natural gas to ease prices.

To view the entire press release and list of Member panel, visit www.house.gov/hastert

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Today in History

1798 - The U.S. Marine Corps was formally re-established by "An Act for Establishing a Marine Corps" passed by the U.S. Congress. The act also created the U.S. Marine Band.

1804 - The United States' first secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton, was killed by Vice President Aaron Burr in a duel.

1934 - The first appointments to the newly created Federal Communications Commission were made.

1934 - U.S. President Roosevelt became the first American chief executive to travel through the Panama Canal while in office.

1955 - The U.S. Air Force Academy was dedicated in Colorado Springs, CO, at Lowry Air Base.

1962 - The first transatlantic TV transmission was sent through the Telstar I satellite.

1972 - U.S. forces broke the 95-day siege at An Loc in Vietnam.

1995 - Full diplomatic relations were established between the United States and Vietnam.

1998 - U.S. Air Force Lt. Michael Blassie, a casualty of the Vietnam War, was laid to rest near his Missouri home. He had been positively identified from his remains that had been enshrined in the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington, VA.

2000 - Arkansas Judge Leon Johnson announced that he would preside over the disbarment case against U.S. President Clinton.

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